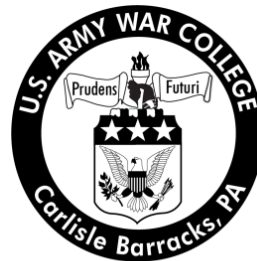


# Civilian Research Project Senior Service College Fellow

## Applying Counterinsurgency Doctrine as a Strategy to Defeat the Mexican Cartels

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2012

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

**APPLYING COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE AS A STRATEGY TO DEFEAT  
THE MEXICAN CARTELS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The current situation within Mexico has become untenable. The Mexican Cartels have descended in barbarism, huge swaths of territory have been taken under their control, and the Mexican government is unable to restore good governance. Spillover violence and illegal immigration along the U.S. South-West Border is a destabilizing factor on Homeland Security. Within the Global War on Terror U.S. Department of Defense strategic thinkers were able to create a viable responsive strategy based on counterinsurgency paradigms. These strategies could provide a useful base for dealing with the Mexican Drug War and SWB Border Crisis. By applying counterinsurgency doctrine to the Drug War (and its narco-terrorists) the paper provides a basis for formulating an appropriate response to cartel violence, criminal activity, and safe-havens. Building on earlier work identifying the cartels as a major U.S. security concern, this paper provides an answer to what can be done about the crisis in Mexico. The paper shows how direct action, population security, information operations, and other appropriate counterinsurgency methods can bring stability to Mexico.





## **Applying Counterinsurgency Doctrine as a Strategy to Defeat the Mexican Cartels**

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”.<sup>1</sup> There comes a time when action must be taken. The Mexican Drug War has become an untenable threat to the government of Mexico and a humanitarian crisis to the World. In an earlier article the author identified the extent of cartel violence within Mexico, as well as the potential for that violence to be coupled with Jihadist ideology and enter the United States.<sup>2</sup> In this follow-up piece, we will examine the practicality of applying counterinsurgency doctrine as a method for defeating the cartels and reestablishing the legitimacy of the Mexican government.

A complete analysis of the four major cartels is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that the cartels have emerged as third generation gangs possessing extensive, asymmetrical warfare capabilities.<sup>4</sup> Their litany of kidnappings, murders, bombings, and torture has led to the death of roughly 50,000 people.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the flow of illegal Mexican immigrants entering America as a result of this violence is fast exceeding half a million.<sup>6</sup> It is in the strategic interest of both the United States and Mexico to take those actions necessary to defeat the cartels and stabilize Mexico.

To date the Mexican government has been fighting the drug war largely alone. Though the United States has supplied limited aid, through the Merida initiative,<sup>7</sup> this has really been a case of too little-too late. President Calderon started the 2006 Mexican Drug War without a concise plan, conducted it haphazardly, and has seen only tragic results. By design the Mexican military has assumed a subservient role to an overall law enforcement approach. Given the size of the cartels, their financial

resources, and their extensive paramilitary capabilities, a purely law enforcement answer is not achievable. Adding to the problem, is the inability to secure the population, a lengthy and complex justice system, and an ineffective penal system. These factors have all led to failure so far. Due to such a failure not only the Mexican government, but potentially Guatemala and Honduras stand threatened.<sup>8</sup> If positive action is not taken to immediately reduce the power of the cartels a hemispheric crisis will result. The proper application of a limited counterinsurgency doctrine can sufficiently degrade the Mexican cartels, reduce their funding, dismantle their leadership, and cripple their infrastructure. A positive result will reestablish law and order within Mexico itself and reduce the cartels to a manageable first generation gang status. Counterinsurgency campaigns have historically been very difficult and complex. Counterinsurgency requires great patience, time-consuming manpower, extensive intelligence, large resources, and often government reform. However, based on the catastrophic violence there is no other choice, but to begin such a campaign in Mexico immediately. It is with this in mind that we analyze successful counterinsurgency thought and apply it against the current crisis in Mexico.

Analyzing the Mexican Cartels within the framework of counterinsurgency doctrine provides a basis for planning. Insurgents seek to break away from state control and form a space that they can govern.<sup>9</sup> A successful counterinsurgency campaign should neutralize the insurgents, secure the population, and reestablish government legitimacy. As counterinsurgency doctrine teaches, “Insurgents succeed by sowing chaos and disorder anywhere; the government fails unless it maintains a degree of order everywhere.”<sup>10</sup> Dr. David Kilcullen, within his book *Counterinsurgency*, provides

an insurgency process model that can be used to explain the methodology of the Mexican cartels.<sup>11</sup> The first step is corruption or criminality within the power elite. This in turn leads to the second step the commission of bad behavior by government officials and powerbrokers. These acts lead to the third step; anger within the populace. This culminates in the final step popular support, if not material support, for the insurgents. The cycle then becomes a closed loop as insurgent activity leads to a further weakening and resulting negative attitude towards the government.

In applying Kilcullen's model to the Mexican crisis, we see that the first step taken by the Mexican cartels is the execution of criminal acts. These acts garner large volumes of cash providing the cartels with greater power and access to enablers. This cash leads to the corruption of government officials, often within the security apparatus. Once corrupted these officials then begin to engage in a series of abuses against the populace. At the lower-end these acts may comprise mere negligence in the performance of their duties, but quite tragically at the higher end actually result in their participation in criminal behavior. A prime example is the wholesale participation in narco trafficking by deserters from the Mexican Special Forces, known as Los Zetas.<sup>12</sup> Cartel criminality along with the co-adaptation of Mexican security forces leaves the populace nowhere to turn. In the Mexican case it is not so much popular anger that advances the cartels, but blatant fear achieved by the use of terror and isolation. Given nowhere to turn the Mexican populace is a tragic victim to the events unfolding before them. Too often they become an enabler of cartel violence, if not wholesale participants. Within the Drug War we see the process model closed by the active

participation in criminal and violent behavior by members of Mexican society that would have under ordinary circumstances been good and decent citizens.

In analyzing the Mexican cartels within the framework of the US Military's Counterinsurgency Field Manual, the most fitting categorization of cartel violence is to identify it as a military focused approach with elements of an urban approach included.<sup>13</sup> The military focused approach has been advocated within Latin American by the likes of Che Guevara.<sup>14</sup> This type of approach aims to overthrow a government through a series of violent actions culminating in an environment of continuous combat under which no government can function. Under the military focused approach violence occurs without a corresponding political campaign. This approach serves to undermine the state by causing the citizenry to end popular support for the state out of a desire to survive. Such an outcome would be to the utmost advantage of an organization needing to operate with complete impunity. As the cartels are divorced from any real concerns for the populace, the presence of a large ungoverned geographical region would be the ultimate safe haven.<sup>15</sup> Within the Mexican Drug War we see the military focused approach already maturing to the point where sustained ground combat is a daily occurrence. Where in fact murder and violence are measured in hours not days and the killings equal hundreds if not thousands per month<sup>16</sup>

Adding to the complexity, the cartels have incorporated certain elements of the Urban Approach into their campaign. This approach is based on small, independent (self-supporting) cells engaging in violence designed to weaken the government, sow disorder, and intimidate the population.<sup>17</sup> Cartel on cartel violence mimics the sectarian violence seen in Northern Ireland.<sup>18</sup> As the Drug War is prolonged, violent attacks are

directed not only at other cartels, but are conducted to intimidate the population. As an example, the assassinations of school teachers are designed to close down the education system, denying the youth of Mexico an education.<sup>19</sup> A government sponsored education which would provide an alternative to the narco-culture. To further advance their campaign the cartels have consistently assassinated government leaders at all levels, with special emphasis on local government and law enforcement. Additionally, they use ultra-violence to fix and intimidate security forces, limiting their ability to respond to attacks.<sup>20</sup> The lack of government presence creates a leadership vacuum which the cartels quickly fill.

In conducting Course of Action development security professionals analyze the enemy in order to determine his Center of Gravity.<sup>21</sup> In counterinsurgency it is no different. The cartels operate through coercion and fear. This is not a mystery; it is in fact the cornerstone of their operating statement “Plato e Plamo...The Silver or the Lead”. As applied, it means that one can participate in drug trafficking and make money or one can refuse and suffer his own or his family’s death. In the absence of security the populace has only one option; capitulate and gain or refuse and die. This method is a true and tested corruption practice long used in Latin America.<sup>22</sup> The target is allowed to benefit or perish, but in neither case will the status quo survive. The victim’s life as he knows it is over, his family, his home, his job, even his self worth and faith are gone at the moment of decision. Whichever option he accepts, capitulation or resistance, he is doomed. It is the absence of an alternative that drives cartel power. If the government is to defeat the cartels, it must defeat Plato e Plamo. Aggressive counter-cartel action will lessen the silver and the provision of security will remove the lead. Left

without silver to give or lead to expend the Cartels cannot manipulate the populace. A populace already sickened by violence and eager to return to normality.<sup>23</sup> Through counterinsurgency operations this receptive audience can be won back.

The initial primary effort is to remove the lead, preserving lives and restoring security. A methodology for such is found within the handbook *Modern Warfare*.<sup>24</sup> The author of this counterinsurgency doctrine, Roger Trinque, lays out a method for quickly dismantling an insurgent network. Within his own experience, he rapidly detained successive members of the insurgent's cellular structure. In doing so he quickly worked up the insurgent's chain of command removing vital leadership nodes before the insurgents could replace them. In essence "clearing" the insurgents from the populace. Upon detaining each individual insurgent, he subjected them to narrowly focused interrogation which primarily solicited the identification of the insurgent above them. These names were quickly applied against known terrorist cell structure. The emerging intelligence product became a linked diagram of insurgents, their cells, and their functions which was used for further targeting. As quickly as this knowledge was garnered it was acted upon. The result of this methodology was a rapid, reoccurring cycle of detention, interrogation, intelligence, and operations resulting in more detentions. It should be historically noted that the intelligence gathering process originally used in this methodology was based upon techniques that are now illegal and unacceptable. However, this methodology should not be abandoned. Today's counterinsurgent is enabled with a sophisticated intelligence apparatus that did not exist at the time this methodology was created. Currently through the use of signals intelligence, imagery intelligence, and proper human intelligence,<sup>25</sup> counterinsurgents

should be able to apply the Trinquier methodology across various strata, while adhering to proper standards.

The Trinquier methodology does not call for an extensive, slow, top-down approach, instead it relies upon the quick acquisition of the information needed to take apart the terrorist structure from the ground up. This is vital, as the cornerstone of this methodology is based upon the rapid disassembly of the insurgent network. This is achieved by conducting detention up the insurgent leadership chain as rapidly as possible, before the insurgents can replenish their losses or adapt their strategy. Detention culminates in the arrest of the insurgent leader himself. This method is successful because it garners not only the top leader, often a charismatic figure in his own right, but it also dismantles the organization as it gets to him. Applied to the Mexican cartels this method may be even more effective as it will have the additional benefit of denying the cartels financial resources which are often held and manipulated at higher levels.<sup>26</sup> What cannot be over emphasized is the need to move rapidly up the cartel chain before the network has time to replenish, go to ground, or flee to safe havens beyond the reach of the Mexican government. The goal within this methodology is to disrupt and deny the network operating flexibility, not to garner criminal convictions. Those can be achieved during the period of detention.

The Trinquier Method may seem counterintuitive to the current law enforcement approach currently being utilized. Law enforcement traditionally moves slowly. At the higher-levels law enforcement may take months, if not years to patiently construct a criminal case that will withstand the adversarial nature of criminal prosecution. This approach requires the police to allow and observe successive criminal acts. Though

such techniques are best for law enforcement, in the Drug War they are not acceptable. The level of violence occurring within Mexico jeopardizes the survivability of society and the government at large. In successful counterinsurgencies such violence has often resulted in the legislative passage of temporary emergency laws.<sup>27</sup> Such laws if properly written and sufficiently resourced could allow for the detainment of numerous narco-traffickers. Such a period of detention would create a buffer zone for the government to occupy and reestablish control. Emergency laws were used during the successful British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya, to good effect.<sup>28</sup>

Undoubtedly, such measures are sensitive and cause righteous concern among civil libertarians. In order to garner public support for any necessary emergency laws a proper information operations campaign must occur. Civil libertarians, when able, should be integrated into the decision-making process, helping to ensure the rights of the populace. As a guaranteed protection of civil liberties, emergency laws should also be self terminating. A vital factor in the initial counterinsurgency campaign will be the appropriate restraint and surgical precision of any action arm employed. Within Mexico the more successful counter-narco agencies have been found within the Mexican Naval Forces, specifically the Mexican Marine Corp.<sup>29</sup> This organization when called upon has had good success. This success could be enhanced and further goodwill obtained, if the organization is schooled in and applies the low signature approach pioneered by the Israeli Defense Forces during the Second Intifada.<sup>30</sup>

Though pivotal to any counterinsurgency campaign direct action operations will not be able to dismantle the cartels alone. Even if sufficient cartel members could be rapidly detained, their long-term incarceration would be a drain on the State. Low-level



and even certain mid-level narco terrorists will have to be removed from the cartel infrastructure through the use of two methods. The first method, which is the key to any counterinsurgency campaign, will be the use of persistent information operations.<sup>31</sup> The IO campaign will have many different themes and audiences. A vital goal will be to drive a wedge between low-level operators and the cartels. Such themes as the harm being done to society, the increased danger of imprisonment, and the eventual personal loss resulting from drug trafficking should be stressed. These themes should be bolstered with positive messages calling for a return to traditional Mexican family values, a call to the patriotism of Mexican citizens, and the benefits of a new secure society. Influential key communicators should be utilized to deliver these messages, whenever possible.

In separating the low-level operative from the insurgents a further method has proven to be of great value. A reconciliation and reintegration program can provide a pressure relieving mechanism. During the last 6 years in Mexico, terrible atrocities have occurred. The initial reaction is to demand long-term punishment. However, the situation in Mexico will not support this. Two things must be remembered. First, hundreds of thousands of people have participated in some form of cartel illegality.<sup>32</sup> This number is simply impossible to prosecute and incarcerate given a criminal justice system that is as lengthy and complex as Mexico's. Additionally, Mexican prisons are already overcrowded, overburdened, and suffer corruption. Certain individuals have done things so terrible as to be beyond reconciliation. For these hard-core one-percenters prosecution is demanded. However, the overwhelming majority of low-level operators will be beyond prosecution, both as a matter of practice and as a matter of

need. Second, cartel violence has not been an abstract occurrence, nor is it a turf war over who makes money at whose expense; rather it is a designed and concentrated campaign of terror. The purpose of this violence is to create a condition where people are enslaved to the cartel, the societal fear of prosecution, and the guilt over acts committed. The threat of prosecution and continued alienation from society will only serve to maintain cartel strength. A proper method of reconciliation will enable community healing, provide reintegration for cartel members, and enable an accounting of victims. Such methods have been successfully used in South Africa and other troubled areas to good effect.<sup>33</sup> Reconciliation must be incorporated into any counterinsurgency campaign. By utilizing reconciliation the Mexican government may very well be able to remove large members of low-level narco terrorists quickly, efficiently, and permanently.

Removing the spectrum of lead will take more than simply reducing cartel members. In this, as in any other successful counterinsurgency campaign, the key to victory will lie in establishing security for the populace. Utilizing the populace within the framework of counter-insurgency realizes a modern version of the “holy-trinity” of war.<sup>34</sup> Within Mexico this can be achieved through two methodologies. The creation of local security forces and the use of population control measures. These methods will achieve the “hold” necessary for government control. Given the long-term infrastructure development within the operational areas affected by the Drug War, the concept of relocating the populace to strategic hamlets is not possible. Instead a Civilian Irregular Defense Program such as the one briefly and successfully tried by the Special Forces in Vietnam could be modeled upon.<sup>35</sup> This type of program enables the creation of local

security forces, allowing the people to achieve sufficient security within their local communities. Not only will this approach greatly reduce cartel violence, it will enhance intelligence gathering a key to any successful counterinsurgency campaign.

Local security forces should be built and maintained within their own neighborhoods. The primary purpose of these forces would be to act as the eyes and ears for more formal security forces. Manned from individuals living in the neighborhoods in which they work, these forces would be well able to note irregularities or outsiders. Local security forces would provide demonstrative, government presence. They would serve to monitor and report criminal behavior and if needed could be used to strengthen formal security forces. They should be capable of self-defense, basic communications, limited incident response, crowd control, first aid, and the like. Training should be quick and simple. Initial training should be limited to those topics necessary for the correct emplacement of forces. Further training can be provided after a local security force program is in place. The initial concern should be on fielding the highest number possible. Such forces would be lightly uniformed, equipped with simple weapons, and body armor owned solely by the government. In order to defeat possible retribution member secrecy should be maintained. All records should be catalogued, stored electronically, and secured.

For security reasons local security forces would not possess operational information, instead they should be generally limited to performing static duties. The most vital component of local security force operations would be the establishment of a radio network constantly connecting them to formal state security forces. Having observed any sort of illegal activity they could immediately forward reports of this activity

to the necessary action arm. A rapid response to any activities they report will be of paramount importance. Additionally, the use of video surveillance networked throughout the hierarchy of the state security apparatus would enable criminal activity, response actions, and other behaviors to be recorded. A parallel network of advisors linked to advisers within the action arms, mentioned above, would further strengthen local security forces. If required, local security forces could operate out of reinforced positions similar to those used by the British in the Northern Ireland campaign.<sup>36</sup> In order to build on success villages within zones of government control should be initially chosen. As these villages are pacified the sphere of government influence should spread, linking secured areas until villages become districts and districts become states under government control.<sup>37</sup> The key to the success of such forces will be in manning them within an appropriate ratio to narco-traffickers. Prior counterinsurgency campaigns have required various ratios, with the median ratio of one protector to every 50 citizens largely advocated. Within Mexico, local security forces can be fielded from the populace at a higher ratio than 1 in 50. In fact, one determinant may be the flooding of contested areas with an overwhelming number of local security forces. As in detention, the intent of local security forces is to disrupt and deny cartel activity. So long as standards are maintained, the more the better.<sup>38</sup>

Security forces will have to be integrated with a program of population control, such as been adapted within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>39</sup> Population control measures have constituted a viable linchpin within several successful counterinsurgency campaigns.<sup>40</sup> A measure used in prior counterinsurgency campaigns is the provision of identification cards containing biometric and geographical

data. Such cards establish identity, evidence geographical origin, control accessibility, and should be connected to eligibility for necessary government assistance. The provision of such cards should not be adversarial, and should be supported with an information operations campaign, along with the increased provision of government assistance. The population should be made aware that possessing such a card, in a correct lawful status, is the key to enhanced security and life support. Additional population control measures could include: checkpoints, curfew, public transportation security, road closures, physical security barriers, and other such means. Population control measures, when supported with appropriate information operations campaigns, have fostered an environment of security and denied insurgents mobility in previous campaigns.<sup>41</sup> They are worthy of being applied here. As a result of population control the cartels will not have free reign to move about the country; they would in fact be denied the rapid movement that facilitates their violence. Additionally, population control will serve as a positive example of government action, assist in the acquisition of necessary intelligence, and help isolate narco-traffickers for the direct action mentioned above. Population control is unpleasant, in relation to the police powers mentioned above, it should be implemented in a manner that is forthright, properly explained, and terminated upon the condition of certain benchmarks. The reduction of population control in areas that are pacified, along with the increased provision of government services, will help win public support as the campaign moves along.

Counterinsurgency history shows that when insurgents have enjoyed cross-border sanctuaries their removal has been extremely difficult to achieve.<sup>42</sup> In responding to counterinsurgency efforts the cartels are likely to seek access to the

United States for two reasons. One will be to remove themselves from the jurisdiction of Mexico, the other may be to engage in retaliatory violent action designed to end U.S. support for the counterinsurgency campaign. Further enhancements to the U.S. South-Western Border in both customs enforcement and border protection will be needed. Additionally, U.S. law enforcement must work jointly with Mexican law enforcement on both sides of the border to insure continuity of targeting. These measures will prevent illegal infiltration and strengthen homeland security.

The provision of security will not stand alone. A parallel campaign waged against cartel financial power will be needed to ensure a successful counterinsurgency. Counter-finance serves a twofold purpose. Operationally it will reduce cartel power by removing the “silver.” In an asymmetrical sense a virtual “clear.” The loss of the “silver” will reduce narco appeal redirecting societal aspirations and behaviors to normal. As in the direct action campaign, counter-finance must be focused on disruption and denial, not criminal conviction. (Much as America's newfound strategy focuses on area denial and area access, we must apply alternative concepts in fighting the cartels.) The financial campaign should include such traditional financial actions as freezing assets, forfeitures, strict enforcement of banking laws, and aggressive tax enforcement. Establishing government partnerships with banking institutions would serve as an accelerator in countering narco-finance. Direct action itself should also take place. Physical seizures of bulk cash, raids of corrupt financial institutions, and counter-smuggling will all be needed. Even these aggressive measures should not stand alone, as the Counterinsurgency Field Manual directs, alternative lines of operations should be actioned.<sup>43</sup> Weaknesses within cartel organizations and methods should be identified

and fully exploited. In identifying such security forces should “think outside the box”. Cartel businesses, infrastructure, communications, and enablers are all legitimate avenues for disruption. As an example, it is well documented that within Mexico the cartels are producing record numbers of methamphetamines. A novel approach would be to garner control over the supply chain for necessary ingredients and to disrupt the cartel’s receipt of such materials. Other lines of operation for exploitation are cartel transportation networks, routes, and machinery. By hindering the cartel's distribution of drugs we would reduce profits, increase cartel communications (ripe for intercept), and create operational risk. All of which would lead to greater targeting opportunities as we work our way up the cartel chain of command.

An additional method for decreasing cartel finances is to reduce the consumption of illegal drugs in America. Arguments between counter-supply and counter-demand approaches should be abandoned, as those methods shown to be most effective in reducing drug demand achieve primacy.<sup>44</sup> As counter-narco efforts are made in Mexico, an extensive information operations campaign should commence within the United States. Such a campaign should be focused on the US population. It should be designed to bring home the hard-hitting reality of the national security threat lurking on the South-West Border. Additionally, the human tragedy involved in the consumption of illegal drugs should be made clear. With a consistent theme laying out the sad fact that illegal drug consumption directly results in cartel terrorism and human atrocity. The U.S. drug culture should no longer be allowed to divorce itself from the real cost of its behavior. Simultaneous IO efforts along the same themes should be directed at the Mexican population. Those participating in the narco-culture in any way should be

forced to realize the extent of their crimes. This IO campaign would serve a twofold purpose. Within the U.S. it would reduce demand for illegal drugs, now averaging \$63 billion a year.<sup>45</sup> Within Mexico it would deny the cartels the cheap labor they rely upon for narcotics production, transportation, and trafficking. The combined effect would be to raise the cost of narco- trafficking, while hopefully reducing the demand for illegal drugs. This would lower the amount of “silver” available to narco-traffickers, resulting in a decrease in their overall power.

A third avenue of approach within a campaign to reduce cartel “silver” is economic reform. The unemployment rate in Mexico is 5 %, with an underemployment rate at 25% (est.).<sup>46</sup> Over 31% of the Mexican population lives in poverty.<sup>47</sup> These numbers reflect the hard economic times that have contributed to the narco-insurgency. A complete analysis of Mexico's economic woes is beyond this paper. Additionally, it must be noted that no amount of economic reform itself can solve the current crisis. However, as US experience in Iraq shows, a lack of economic alternatives creates conditions where violence flourishes.<sup>48</sup> There it was seen that economically desperate people can become co-adapted into terror structures simply as a means to feed their family. With this in mind it is imperative that Mexico, and its economic partners, set the conditions for improved job growth, resulting in increased personal wages. Proper employment creates an alternative to participating in the narco-culture. Job creation will reduce the numbers of people willing to work for the cartels, raise the cost of cartel labor, and reduce cartel profits. On the positive side it will also strengthen the government base as taxes are paid on legitimate income. Unlike other historical counterinsurgencies complete governmental or economic reform is not called for in the



Mexican case, therefore limited reform directed at economical renewal may be sufficient. This is good news for the government of Mexico. If it takes rapid, proper, and intelligent economic measures it could see an immediate return on its efforts within this area.

The situation in Mexico is dire. When the author began research last summer on the Mexican Drug War the death toll was at 35,000, by the midwinter of 2012 the death toll exceeds 50,000, a catastrophic acceleration.<sup>49</sup> Tragically, the human toll has now reached an Iraq like level. Most alarmingly, the cartels are rapidly advancing in their violence, techniques, and power. The cartels constitute a threat to the security of the United States. Decisive action is needed. The uncoordinated, poorly resourced, limited law-enforcement approach taken to date is useless. What is needed is a strategic, focused, well-equipped campaign; operationally designed upon successful counterinsurgency techniques. This is not to say that we re-create the French situation in Algiers, the British situation in Malaya, or the American situation in Vietnam. It is to say that through a combined, joint, interagency process sufficient resources are dedicated to defeat the cartels as soon as possible. Whether this is resourced financially, provided for militarily, or even coordinated by the United States will be subject to an analysis of what is best between partner nations. Clearly any solution will have to be Mexican led, Mexican sustainable, Mexican capable, and, above all, achievable by Mexico. Expectations must be kept real. A fair and harsh appraisal of Mexican society and government legitimacy will be needed to determine what normal ever looked like. Only by knowing what normal was can the campaign chart an end state. Like all counterinsurgency campaigns before it, this campaign will be long and

hard, taking a toll on Mexico and its people. Additionally, the United States must be prepared to sustain its effort for many, many years, both in direct support to the Mexican cause and in the enhanced provision of resources for its own security. During a time of worldwide economic downturn, competing global demands, and sustained US combat, the commencement of another violent campaign is not attractive. This is understood, but cannot be relied upon. The cartels represent a new chapter in the era of asymmetrical warfare. They are wealthy, internationally connected, multi-level capable, and abhorrently violent. The Mexican Drug War has failed, leading to greater enemy capability, reduced government control, and untold damage on the Mexican people. Waiting out the cartels is not an option; the best course of action is to begin the counterinsurgency campaign now.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke.

<sup>2</sup> John Maier, *The Mexican Cartels and Jihadist Terrorism: The Nightmare Next Door*, *In Support of the Common Defense: Homeland Defense and Security Journal*, (Carlisle, PA: USAWC, 2012), pagination unknown.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete, concise review of the cartels, See Colleen W. Cook, *Mexico's Drug Cartels* (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, February 25, 2008) 7-11.

<sup>4</sup> Max G. Manwaring, *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Crime: Shadows from the Past and Portents for the Future* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 109.

<sup>5</sup> Ashley Franz, "The Mexico drug war: Bodies for billions," Jan 20, 2012. CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/15/world/mexico-drug-war-essay/index.html> (Accessed Jan 28, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Hoefer, Nancy Rytina, and Christopher Campbell, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2005* (Washington D.C.: Department of Homeland Security, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed description of Merida and its intent, See William R. Brownfield, Remarks before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Management (Oct 4, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Koss, "Central America's Bloody Drug Problem," Jan 19, 2012. CNN Video file, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/19/world/americas/narco-wars-guatemala-honduras/index.html> (accessed February 3, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Gen David H. Petraeus, USA and Lt. Gen James F. Amos, USMC, eds, *U.S Army- Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>11</sup> David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 53.

<sup>12</sup> Lisa J. Campbell, Los Zetas: operational assessment, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21, No 1 (March 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> Robert D. Lamb *Ungoverned Areas and Threats From Safe Havens, Final Report of the Ungoverned Areas Project* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning, 2008) 15, and Angel Rabasa and John E. Peters, Dimensions of Un-governability, & Dimensions of Conduciveness, *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risk* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corp. 2007). Insurgents often seek to break away from state control and form an ungoverned space that they can control. (Alternatively known as an Un-Governed Area.) Creating safe havens beyond the governance, and resulting law enforcement interference, of the Mexican government is the goal of the cartels. Already limited geographical areas have fallen under cartel control. These are areas where "illicit actors can operate with impunity...and...can organize, train and operate in relative security." The continued development of these safe havens would create a veritable "narco-state". Cartel violence is a continuous pressure on the Mexican government and society designed to culminate in the destruction of both. A complete report and synopsis on Safe Havens is beyond the scope of this footnote. Suffice it to say that Safe Havens and counter-measures against them will be of critical importance to security professionals in the coming decades. To learn more about them read *Ungoverned Areas and Threats from Safe Havens* and *Ungoverned Territories*.

<sup>16</sup> For daily reports on the Mexican Drug War and its resulting violence, See <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/>.

<sup>17</sup> Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 10. See also Carlos Marighella, *Mini-manual of the Urban Guerilla*, an infamous classical insurgent/terrorist primer.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Jason Beaubien, "Education is Latest Causality In Mexico's Drug War," September 8, 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/09/28/140854544/education-is-latest-casualty-in-mexicos-drug-war> (accessed Feb 4, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, "Security and Foreign Forces, Mexico" February 6, 2012, linked from *HIS Jane's: Defence & Security Intelligence & Analysis* at [http://search.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/mexis140.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=mexico security forces&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod\\_Name=CACS&](http://search.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/sent/cacsu/mexis140.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=mexico security forces&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=CACS&) (accessed March 9, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984), 595-596.

<sup>22</sup> Ernesto Dal Bo, Pedro Dal Bo, and Rafael di Tella, "*Plata o Plomo*" Bribe and Punishment in a theory of Political Influence, Nov 6, 2002, linked from <http://www.hbs.edu/research/facpubs/workingpapers/papers2/0203/03-060.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Enrique Krauze, "Can this Poet Save Mexico," *New York Times*, October 1, 2011. For an op-ed on Javier Sicilia a noted Mexican poet whose son was killed in the "Drug War". He has bravely founded a peace organization called "Peace with Justice and Dignity" which demands a government response to cartel violence.

<sup>24</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare, a French View of Counterinsurgency* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Southwest Border Support Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, September 2011), 9. Interrogation techniques such as those outlined and authorized through The Detainee Treatment Act applying FM 2-22.3 Human Intelligence Collection Operations. Additionally, it should be noted that all CI methods chosen must be in conformity with host nation laws.

<sup>26</sup> Cook, *Mexico's Drug Cartel*, 3. For a demonstration of the ratio of high-level financial enablers to low-level operatives. Detention would also serve to create a "white-space" between the populace and the cartels, allowing room for the Mexican government to operate.

<sup>27</sup> The Mexican Government has already utilized certain "Emergency Measures" in the Northeast States. Article 29 of the Mexican constitution allows for federal supremacy in the administration of lower governments when "there is a grave disturbance to the public peace". Gary J. Hale, *Mexico's Government Begins to Retake Northeastern Mexico* (Rice University, TX: James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy, December 9, 2011), 7.

<sup>28</sup> A good example of the successful use of emergency measures in combating insurgents can be found in the British Campaign in Malaysia. John A. Nagl, *How To Eat Soup With A Knife* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 63.

<sup>29</sup> For an example on the trustworthiness of Mexican Naval Force, See *Southwest Border Support Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, September 2011) 17, recommending greater U.S. partnership with them.

<sup>30</sup> Sergio Catignani, "The Israel Defense Forces and the Al-Aqsa Intifada," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009), 239. Mexican counterinsurgency forces would be additionally strengthened, with the provision of professional advisers originating from countries that are beyond the reach of the cartels. Given the taxing nature of current, worldwide deployments and international security concerns, careful consideration should be given to the procurement of advisory packages. Advisors will need to be committed for the "long-haul". Further, custom advisory packages could be fluid enough to be modified as needed during various phases of the counterinsurgency campaign. Such packaging would help maintain necessary operational security and could be a cost saving method. Alternatively, sufficient military advisers would have to be provided that are incorruptible, possess the requisite counterinsurgency knowledge, are culturally aware, and could be assigned to support the campaign for as many years as needed.

<sup>31</sup> Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 4. See also Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 152.

<sup>32</sup> "100,000 Foot Soldiers in Mexican Cartels," *The Washington Times*, March 3, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> *South African Truth and Reconciliation Home Page*, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/> (accessed February 5, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> Nagl, *How To Eat Soup With A Knife*, 128.

<sup>36</sup> Towers, reinforced checkpoints, protected structures etc. For a discussion on the importance of security infrastructure as part of "framework operations" see Richard Ion, "Britain's Longest War," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009), 167.

<sup>37</sup> For advice on not hitting the hardest areas first see Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 295. For a discussion on a workable method of implementing the counterinsurgency concept of ink spotting see Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 54-5 and Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 6. See also David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare Theory and Practice* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. Publisher, 1964), 99.

<sup>38</sup> Local Security Forces could also provide desperately needed supplemental income to poor communities.

<sup>39</sup> Usama Halabi, "Legal analysis and critique of some surveillance methods used by Israel," in *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine Population, Territory and Power* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2011), 199-216. See also Elia Zureik, "Colonialism, surveillance and population control," in *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine Population, Territory and Power* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2011), 3-39.

<sup>40</sup> Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 5. See also Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*, 115.

<sup>41</sup> Trinquier, *Modern Warfare, a French View of Counterinsurgency*, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, *War, Will, and Warlords* (Quantico Virginia, Marine Corps University Press, 2012), 59.

<sup>43</sup> Petraeus, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 14, 154.

<sup>44</sup> For a comparison on the cost and merits of each approach See John P. Sullivan, *Counter-supply and counter-violence approaches to narcotics trafficking*, 21, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 179, (2010) and Robert J. Bunker & Matt Begert, *Counter-demand approaches to narcotics trafficking*, 21, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 196, (2010).

<sup>45</sup> For a great series on the cost of drug use across America at all levels, See “Drug Wars”, *Frontline*, <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs44/44849/44849p.pdf> (accessed February 7, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> CIA World Fact Book, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html> (accessed January 30, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Sandra Polaski, *Mexican Employment, Productivity and Income a Decade after NAFTA*, Brief Submitted to The Canadian Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2004). Detailing the overall economic downturn to the Mexican economy as a result of NAFTA.

<sup>48</sup> Lionel Beehner, “Economic Doldrums in Iraq,” Council on Foreign Relations, June 20, 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/economics/economic-doldrums-iraq/p13629> (accessed March 8, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Franz, “The Mexico drug war: Bodies for billions,” *CNN*.